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AUTHOR Selman, James W.
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ABSTRACT

Educators need to alleviate the problems experienced by students in making the transition from one institution and/or program to another. These movements result in unnecessary duplication and use of educational resources and can cause students to lose valuable time, effort, and motivation. To interrelate secondary and postsecondary vocational education programs, a model has been constructed that is comprehensive in nature and designed to serve four specific student groups. The groups are students with secondary training, students with secondary training and work experience, students with only work experience, and students with informal training or undocumented training--in regard to their proposed postsecondary field of study. Subsequent to classification, a three-stage process enables students to receive appropriate placement commensurate with previous experiences. These stages sequentially include screening, testing, and awarding of credit. The articulation process concludes with awarding of credit. Students then have the option to continue with the next course or complete the program. To ensure program quality, all postsecondary students are required to pass an Occupational Competency Test as a certification examination prior to graduation. (YLB)

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TITLE: AN ARTICULATION MODEL FOR ADVANCED PLACEMENT OF STUDENTS IN TECHNICAL COLLEGES

AUTHOR: SELMAN, JAMES W.

DESCRIPTORS: •ARTICULATION MODEL; •ARTICULATION (PROGRAM); •CAREER EDUCATION; •EDUCATIONAL PLANNING; •POST SECONDARY EDUCATION; •SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION; •TECHNICAL EDUCATION; •VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT: TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES IN MOST OCCUPATIONAL AREAS CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMPLEXITY OF LIFE INTO TODAY'S SOCIETY. THESE COMPLEX SKILLS ARE DEVELOPED IN LATTER STAGES OF FORMAL EDUCATION AND ARE BUILT ON BASIC ONES. THUS THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM NEEDS CONTINUITY, IT SHOULD BE A SINGLE SYSTEM WHEN OBSERVED FROM THE STUDENT'S VIEWPOINT. CONCEPTUAL COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS DEVELOPED EARLY IN THE LEARNING PROCESS LIMITS OR ENHANCES THE LEARNERS ABILITY TO BENEFIT FROM POST SECONDARY EDUCATION. ARTICULATION HAS BEEN WIDELY ENDORSED BUT HAS NOT BEEN WIDELY ACCOMPLISHED. INDICATIONS ARE THAT ARTICULATION PRACTICES COULD BE ADVANCED IF MODELS FOR PLANNING THESE ACTIVITIES WERE DEVELOPED AND USED. THE MODEL PRESENTED IN THIS PAPER COULD HELP ADVANCE THE ARTICULATION PROCESS.

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An Articulation Model for Advanced Placement of Students in Technical Colleges

James W. Selman

Coordinator of Extension and Public Service

Department of Vocational and Adult Education

Auburn University, Alabama 36830

Running head: AN ARTICULATION MODEL

An Articulation Model for Advanced Placement of Students in Technical Colleges

Educators are confronted today with many complex issues. Among the most crucial is the responsibility of alleviating problems experienced by students in making the transition from one institution and/or program to another. Today's student rarely complete their formal education within a single institution. Vocational students are moving from junior high school exploratory programs serving, as an introduction to technology, into high schools programs, which introduce students to basic occupational competencies, and/or into courses designed to teach specific occupational skills. After these students continue on into technical colleges, junior colleges, and/or senior colleges to complete their formal education. These movements result in unnecessary duplication and use of educational resources and can cause students to lose valuable time, effort, and motivation.

Waste and/or slippage in the American Educational System is the basic issue behind many recent studies and reports. The Business-Higher Education Forum (1983), Twentieth Century Fund (1983), National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983), National Commission on Secondary Vocational Education (1984), National Council for Occupational Education (1985), Association of American Colleges (1985), Kadamus and Daggett (1986), Dumke (1986),

and Council on Post-secondary Accreditation (1986) are among the authors, councils, and commissions indicating the need for educational reform.

Evidence suggests that considerable curriculum duplication exists, particulary between the last two years of high school and the first two years of college. The duplication of content between these two levels within education has existed in part for years.

Blanchard (1971) found that almost one-third of the subject matter content of the first two years of college was merely a repetition of what had already been taught in high school. The study revealed that content of high school courses had been rearranged into college courses that were offered under other names. Although this study was concerned with academic subjects, the same duplication exits within vocational-technical subjects and program areas. Some repetition of subject matter is desirable. Such duplication should be planned and based upon pre-determined objectives reflective of each student's need. The Association of American Colleges (1985) suggested that the skills needed by an effective citizen have become more complex than they were in the past. Technological advances in most occupational areas are also contributing to the complexity of life into today's society. These more complex skills are developed in the latter stages of formal education. Yet necessary complex skills must be built on basic ones. Thus the educational system needs continuity,

it should be a single system when observed from the student's viewpoint. Conceptual competencies and skills developed early in the learning process limits or enhances the student's abilities to benefit from high schools and post secondary programs Kean (1985) described the educational system as no longer sufficient, not because its quality had declined, but because our needs for it had expanded so dramatically. What is at stake is not only our nation's economic renewal but also the capacity for true resurgence of all dimensions of our personal, civic, and cultural lives. From the perspective of what needs to be done as a nation an educational system doing more of the same is not enough. The educational system must allow students to receive credit for competencies they have already obtained and thus provide time and other resources for acquisition of other competencies.

Interest in problems associated with vocational-technical articulation, in part, is a result of the work of David S. Bushwell (1978), who identified and described several successful articulation efforts. Although articulation has been widely endorsed, such goals have not been widely accomplished. Indications are that articulation in vocational-technical programs occurs only in a few instances and in certain occupational areas (Knight and Knight, 1985).

The present interest and need for resolution to the articulation problem in vocational-technical education has several

sources: (a) falling enrollments and the ensuing struggle for survival, (b) lean federal and state budgets forcing development of diversified and flexible delivery systems, and (c) changing governance in recent years of public educational institutions. This occurs at the same time that the number of occupationally oriented curricula are continuing to increase. This number includes a growing list of two-year degree granting programs offered in community and/or technical colleges. The number of competency based vocational education courses being provided in well equipped secondary programs is also increasing. These combined forces dictate the necessity of achieving goals of articulation improvement within vocational-technical education.

In transferring from one educational experience to another a student typically faces artificial barriers. Too often there is loss of credit for educational experiences which have been mastered. Thus, students are forced to spend time, money and duplicated efforts unnecessarily (The Alabama Post-Secondary Articulation Task Force, 1985).

In July of 1979, the Alabama State Board of Education acceptance of a position paper presented by the Alabama Advisory Council on Vocational Education. That paper entitled "Position Paper on Articulation" highlighted the need for interrelating secondary and post-secondary vocational education programs.

The Alabama Research Coordinating Unit funded a project

entitled "Development of Procedures and Agreements to Enhance Student Articulation Between Secondary and Post-Secondary Vocational Educational Programs." This project was started in order to operationalize the articulation concept on a statewide basis. The project resulted in the establishment of a task force to review articulation agreements and to draft an articulation model.

The model, summarized in the flow chart of Figure 1, is a modification of the model endorsed in 1979 by the Alabama State Board of Education. This model was constructed to be comprehensive in nature and designed to serve four specific student groups (specified later). Each group should benefit from an effective articulation agreement.

Insert Figure 1 about here

The classifying stage places a student into one of four articulation groups as follows: (a) students with only secondary training in their proposed post-secondary field of study (Group I); (b) students with secondary training and work experience in their proposed post-secondary field of study (Group II); (c) students with only work experience in their proposed post-secondary field of study (Group III); and (d) students with informal training or training that cannot be documented in their proposed post-secondary

field of study (Group IV).

Subsequent to classifying, a three-stage process enables students to receive appropriate placement commensurate with previous experiences. These stages sequentially include: (a) screening, (b) testing, and (c) awarding of credit. The flow chart delineates the procedures by which each student can move through the stages of the articulation process.

The first stage, "Screening," is used to identify skills and knowledge that if demonstrated by the student can result in awarding of credit for competencies mastered. This screening stage establishes the challenge paths that are acceptable as a means for documenting previous learning experiences. Screening consists of the following elements:

1. Document of evidence (A). A student behavior and skill rating scale presently utilized in Alabama.

2. Employer survey (B). A proposed instrument which will allow employers to document skills possessed by prospective students who are applying for verification of occupational competencies.

3. Interview (C). An opportunity to explain the experience to be assessed to a Guidance Counselor and/or a Vocational Instructor from the proposed area of study.

4. Program information checklist (D). A proposed short instrument to assess the students' familiarity with tools and terms associated with the proposed area of study.

The "Test" stage is the second stage and is concerned with documentation of the skills and knowledge identified in the screening stage. Testing consists of two elements;

1. Theory test (E). An instrument designed to measure basic theoretical knowledge in the course for which credit is desired.

2. Hands-on test (F). A practical examination which is designed to measure ability to perform various procedures required in the course for which credit is desired.

The third stage, "Awarding of Credit," deals with fulfillment of program requirements of the institution. Checkpoints for this stage include the following:

1. Enroll in course (G). This is the normal process for a student to follow if advanced standing is not appropriate or available.

2. Award credit (H). This can be fulfilled by receiving advanced standing as a result of moving successfully through the first three stages (classifying, screening, testing) of the

Articulation Model or by satisfactorily completing normal course requirements.

With awarding of credit, the articulation process is complete. Students then have the option to continue with next course (I) or to complete the program (J). A student completing a vocational course thereby may enroll in the next course in the program sequence. A student failing to articulate any one course, must enroll in all subsequent vocational courses remaining in the program of study. Finally, to ensure program quality, all post-secondary students are required to pass an Occupational Competency Test (SOCAT), as a certification examination prior to graduation.

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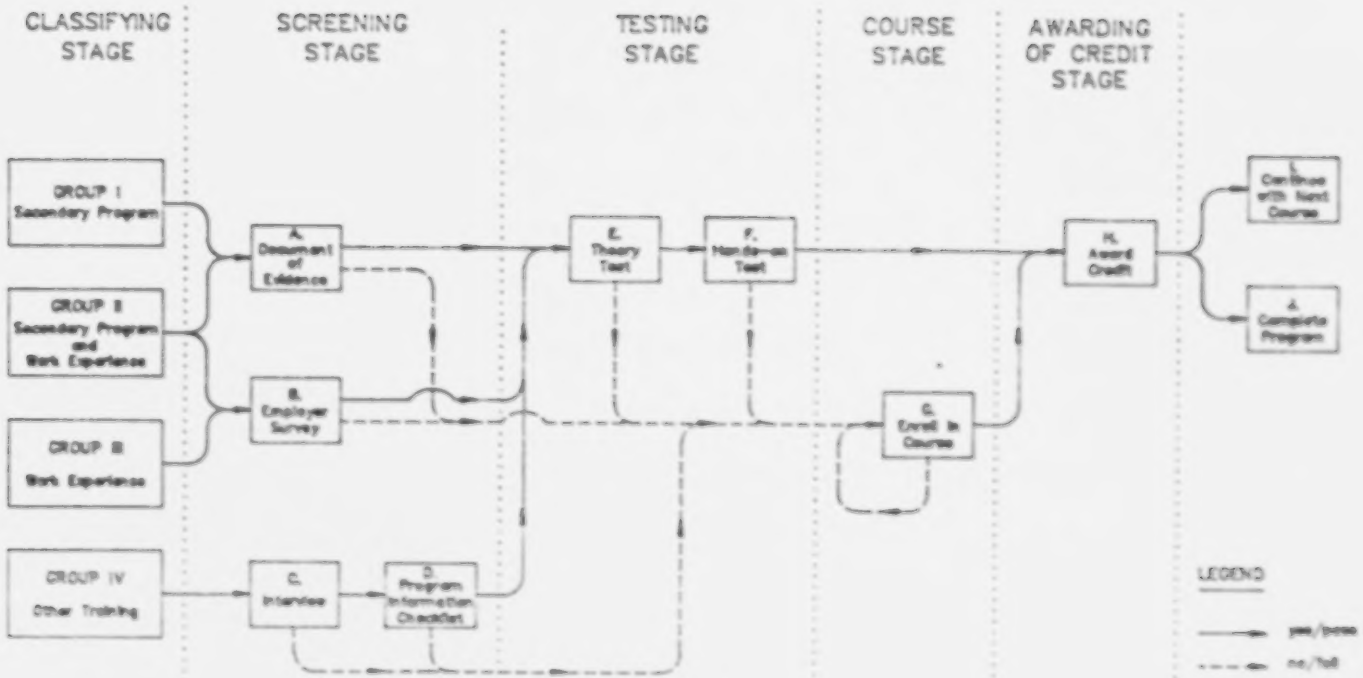
Figure 1



An Articulation Model

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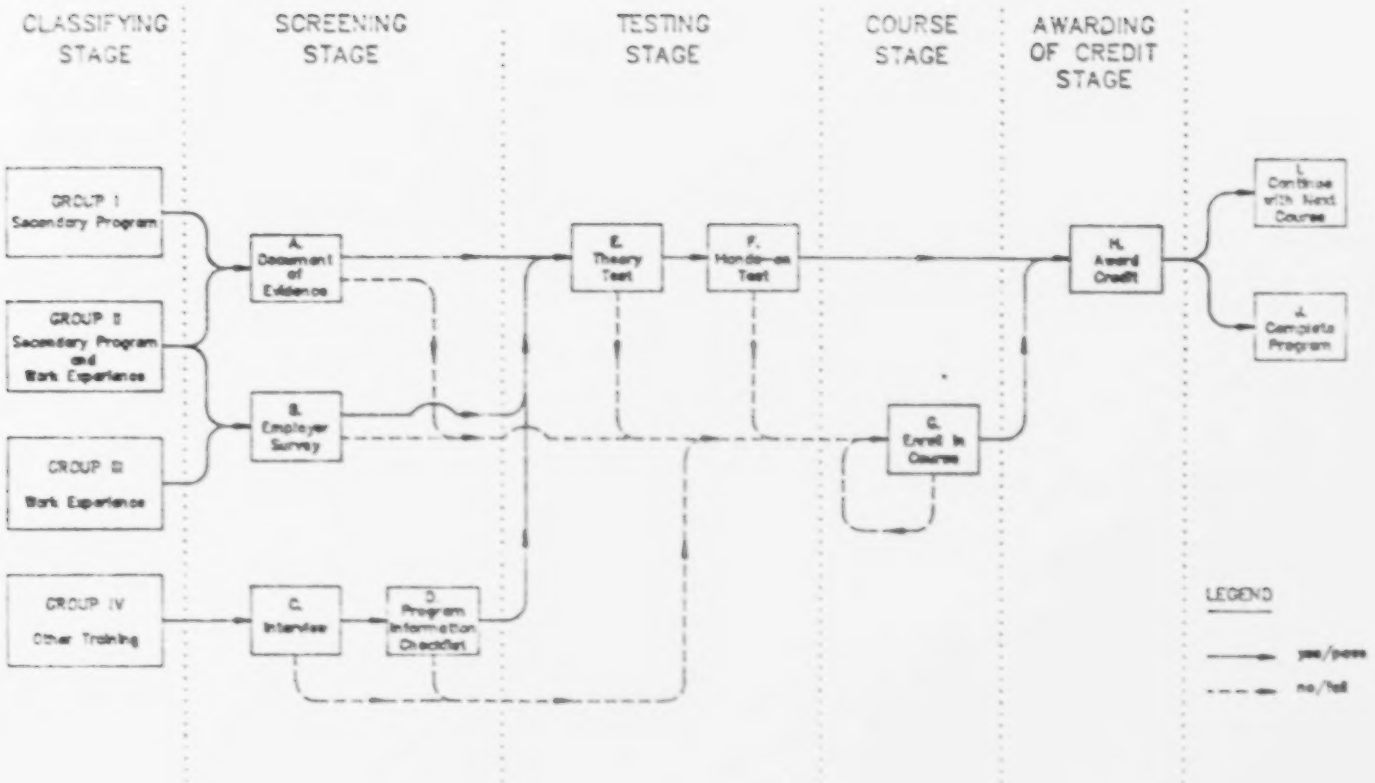
Figure 1



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